

Rocky Hill Congregational Church  
Rocky Hill, Connecticut

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of Connecticut

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Harold H. Davis, District Officer  
29 Whitney Ave., New Haven, Conn.

ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Rocky Hill, Hartford County, Conn.

Owner: Rocky Hill Congregational Church

Date of Erection: 1808

Architect: Not known

Builder: Not known

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: Two stories

Materials of Construction: Stone foundation  
Shingled roof  
Clapboard exterior  
Hand hewed timbers throughout  
All wooden clock

Other Existing Records: A History of the Church and  
an Appreciation of the Life  
of Calvin Chapin. - Andrew Twaddle

List of Photographs:

1. South Elevation
2. Southeast Elevation
3. Entrance Detail
4. Balcony Detail No. 1
5. Balcony Detail No. 2
6. Interior View
7. Ceiling Detail
8. Roof Framing
9. Tower Framing
10. Wooden Works of Clock

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## ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Rocky Hill, Hartford County, Conn.

In Rocky Hill, Connecticut there stands a church known as the Rocky Hill Congregational Church which is a very fine example of the early New England Meeting House.

The present structure, the second meeting house of the Rocky Hill parish, was dedicated on September 22, 1808, and was at that time under the jurisdiction of the Stepney Ecclesiastical Society.

Rocky Hill, in earlier times, was a section of Wethersfield, and it wasn't until 1843 that it was incorporated as a separate township with political autonomy. On December 19, 1720, twenty three inhabitants of this section petitioned a Town Meeting in Wethersfield to grant sixty acres of land for church use. The first step in this movement took place seven years later, when on June 7, 1727 the organization of the Congregational Church was effected. The first meeting house was built at that time, and was used successfully for some eighty years with all the common discomforts of the early places of worship.

The present structure was paid for by taxation upon the parishoners, and as was mentioned before, is typical of the early church. It had its gallery, its slave quarters (not so much for religious reasons, but as to have the slaves in a safe place), its lofty pulpit, and it was unheated. The church was built with a steeple and the ball on the vane was said to have been measured with corn and found to have a capacity of thirty six gallons. It is of frame construction, covered with clapboards, and the roof shingled (now with asbestos). The front of the building, unlike the modern religious edifices, contains six windows.

Probably the most famed pastor of the church was Calvin Chapin who served in this capacity for over fifty years. He was a member of the class of 1788 from Yale, and probably its most beloved brother. During his ministry he was considered one of the most important clerics in New England and his counsel was regarded with deference as coming from a man of clear intelligence. He was the organizer and leader of the Connecticut Bible Society. He held a widespread reputation as a wit, and although

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this fact has never been verified it is often maintained that Dr. Chapin was offered the presidency of Yale University. His most ardent efforts were in behalf of total abstinence. He wrote a series of articles on intemperance and created much attention to this problem.

So, one can see the vast influence a man of this caliber must have wielded over his own particular parish and what effect must have had on the growth and life of this typical New England Church.

Sources of Information: A History of the Church and  
an Appreciation of the Life  
of Calvin Chapin. - Andrew Twaddle

Author:

*John F. Twaddle*

Approved:

*Harold H. Davis. June 23, 1939.*